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Guðmundur J. Guðmundsson

THE COD AND THE COLD WAR

This paper is an overview of the Anglo-Icelandic fishery disputes from 1952–1976. Its main emphasis is on the negotiations between the British and the Icelandic governments but it also addresses other aspects of the disputes, such as the effects they had on Iceland's relations with NATO and the United States and the effect on the balance of power between the Eastern and Western bloc in the North-Atlantic.

Introduction

The Cod War is the popular term for the Anglo-Icelandic fisheries disputes in the 20th century.¹ Each of these disputes had its distinctive features. In the 4-mile conflict of 1952–1956 there were no serious clashes in the fishing grounds but the British fishing industry resorted to an embargo on Icelandic fish in the UK in its attempt to force Iceland to allow British trawlers to continue their fishing inside the 4-mile limit.

In the 12-mile dispute from 1958–1961 Britain sent naval vessels to protect its trawlers in Icelandic waters, and although there were no serious clashes between the frigates and the Coastguard vessels, commonly known as the gunboats, the situation was at times very tense. In the 50-mile dispute 1972–1973 and the 200-mile dispute 1975–1976 the Icelandic coast guard vessels used trawl-wire cutters to harass the trawlers and British frigates, and Icelandic gun boats collided again and again, suffering serious damage but luckily without casualties. In the 200-mile dispute, Iceland broke off diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom. That was the only time two NATO countries broke off diplomatic relations during the Cold War. All four conflicts ended in what can be called an Icelandic victory and in the end the United Kingdom gave way at the negotiating table.

When examining the Cod Wars several interesting problems rise. The first one is of cause – how did the disputes affect NATO and relations within the alliance? Why did a conflict between two NATO allies become so intense in the middle of the Cold War and why were both parties so unyielding? What hindered NATO from reacting and using its authority to settle the 12-mile, 50-mile and 200-mile disputes? Why did the United States keep such a low profile in all the disputes? What did the Soviet government make of all this and why did it not use the opportunity in the 200-mile conflict to drive a wedge between the NATO countries? These and many other questions will be considered in the following paper.

The 4-mile dispute 1952–1956

Icelandic fishermen almost exclusively exploited the fishing grounds off Iceland, during World War II. The only exceptions were fishing vessels from the Faeroe Islands and an occasional British trawler, heroically defying German U-boats and mines.

Soon after the war, foreign trawlers resumed their fishing off Iceland and as time went on the fishing fleets were renovated and more powerful vessels gradually replaced the pre-war fleet. After a few years it became clear that some of the most important fish stocks around Iceland were threatened by over-fishing. The Icelandic government reacted; first by passing the 1948 law on the Scientific Preservation of the Continental Shelf and then in 1952 with the extension of the fishing limit to four miles. These actions were based on the Truman Declaration of 1945 and the 1951 ruling of the International Court at The Hague in the Anglo-Norwegian fishery dispute. According to that ruling, it was not contrary to international law to preserve fish stocks in fjords and bays by extending the fishing limit. The British, Belgian, French and Dutch governments protested against the extension but officially there was very little they could do, since Iceland's action was according to international law. In Britain, on the other hand, the fishing industry put an embargo on Icelandic fresh fish.² This was not a government action but many believe it was endorsed by it.³ At least it is certain the government did nothing to stop the embargo. The Icelanders pointed out that the embargo contravened several treaties and international obligations of the British government, but to no avail.⁴ The goal seems to have been to force the Icelanders into a bilateral agreement that would have allowed British trawlers to continue fishing inside the 4-mile limit, in spite of the International Court ruling.

The Icelanders reacted by searching for new markets. Markets for salted cod in Italy and Portugal opened in 1952 and export of frozen fish fillets to the United States expanded, but most important in 1953, Iceland, first of the NATO-aligned nations, signed a long term trade agreement with the Soviet Union, and very soon it had become one of Iceland's most important trading partners and continued to be so until it was dissolved.⁵

There is good reason to consider the motive Soviet Union in establishing trade with Iceland. The trade agreement was signed at a time when trade and cultural relations between the Eastern and Western block was on the rise after Stalin's death. The Soviet government was very interested in Iceland's fishing products and wanted to sell all kinds of goods which the Icelanders were interested in; oil, machinery, timber and cars. The Icelandic trade negotiators all agreed that the Soviets' primary motive in the talks was trade⁶ but it is easy to imagine the Soviet government sensing the possibility of using the strained political and economical relations between Iceland and Britain arising from the embargo in its political manoeuvring. In a memorandum from 1950 the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrej Vyshinski stated that trade relations with Iceland should encourage positive trends in the Icelandic economy and give support to the Socialist Party.⁷ Apart from the question whether this was the objective or not in 1953, Soviet-Icelandic trade was to the advantage of both governments and caused prolonged irritation in the Pentagon and NATO headquarters.

Even though the Icelanders came out victorious, the Icelandic Prime Minister, Ólafur Thors, on his own initiative continued to discuss the embargo with the British

government. His family had owned one of the largest trawler companies in Iceland and he was a confirmed Anglophile. He tried both flattery and thinly veiled threats. He reminded the British representatives that both states belonged to NATO, mentioned Iceland's expanding trade with the Soviet Union and the fact that the pro-Soviet Socialist Party had an electoral base of 20%; nevertheless the British remained as unyielding as ever and he did not succeed.⁸

After prolonged negotiations at the initiative of the OEEC the embargo was finally lifted in 1956.⁹ The long time that lapsed between the extension of the fishery limit and the lifting of the embargo indicates that the British were immune to the line of argument that their behaviour would damage NATO. There are no indications that NATO put official pressure on the British to reach an agreement, although pressure might have been applied behind the scenes.¹⁰ The US government showed concern over the embargo and Iceland's trade with the Soviet Union but they did not react actively, except by facilitating Iceland's frozen fish imports to the United States.

In his book on the Anglo-Icelandic fishery disputes, former Minister for Fisheries, Lúðvík Jósepsson, considered Thors's motives in his private negotiations with the British, why he continued to pursue them long after Iceland had in fact won the dispute. In his opinion, Prime Minister Thors, who was a strong advocate of Western co-operation, was trying to save the reputation of the British government and several western institutions like NATO and the OEEC.¹¹

The 12-mile dispute 1958–1961

The same year that the British lifted the embargo the parliamentary elections in Iceland were won by the left and centre parties, The Social Democrats, The People's Alliance and The Progressive Party, and they formed a new government. This was the first government of a NATO-state that included ministers belonging to a party friendly with the Soviet Union, that is, the People's Alliance. On the new government's agenda was a revision of the defence treaty between Iceland and the United States and an extension of the fishery limit from 4 to 12-miles. For some time, attempts had been made to reach an international agreement on fishery limits and coastal jurisdiction. Several states had already claimed 12 or 200 mile jurisdiction and the Icelandic government was anxious to join the 12-mile club. Iceland's extension of its fishery limit and the revision of the defence agreement were in the next years to cause concern in NATO-headquarters and with Western governments.

Most Icelanders agreed on the principle of an extension but there was disagreement on method. The People's Alliance considered the extension a domestic affair and many prominent people in the Independence Party (conservative) were of the same opinion, especially those connected with the fishing industry in the Western part of the country and the Western Fjords. On the other hand the Progressive Party was willing to negotiate with Britain and West Germany and abide to the rules that NATO had set down in similar cases, when there were confrontations between member states in sensitive international disputes. However the party leadership was determined to extend the fishery limit if the negotiations showed no result. The leaders of the Independence Party and the Social Democrats supported extension but most of them were quite eager to prevent confrontations with other NATO

governments and were willing to reach out to meet their demands in some way. They accused the People's Alliance of using the extension to cause trouble within NATO but the Socialists replied by accusing their opponents of putting NATO's interests before Iceland's. Neither was completely true. The Socialists' primary purpose was not to hurt NATO, but they considered it an extra bonus. The same applies to their opponents. They were ready to reach further out for a compromise with the British than the Progressives and the Socialists, but most of them were not ready to sacrifice any important interests.¹²

There are indications that the British misunderstood this disagreement and thought that the Icelanders were not of one mind about extending the fishery limit. Cryptic and incautious remarks from the Icelandic president, Ásgeir Ásgeirsson, and some prominent businessmen could be interpreted that way but this was definitely not the case, except in a very few individual cases.¹³

During the negotiations between Iceland and Britain, before the extension in 1958, the Icelandic government proposed an agreement consisting of a three-year adjustment period for the British trawlers to fish inside the 12-mile limit and modification of base lines in favour of the Icelandic inshore fishermen. Of course the British refused, claiming that the extension was not according to international law and pointed out that they had been fishing in Icelandic waters since the early 15th century and therefore had traditional rights to fish there. However, because of Iceland's economic dependency on fish, they were willing to give up some of their historical rights to facilitate the negotiations.

During the summer of 1958 both the Icelandic Prime Minister Hermann Jónasson and Minister for Foreign Affairs Guðmundur Í. Guðmundsson threatened with Iceland's resignation from NATO and the outing of the US forces from their military base in Keflavík if the British government would send the Royal Navy inside the 12-mile limit. NATO's Secretary General, Paul-Henri Spaak, made attempts to reconcile the disputing parties in the summer of 1958 but without success. The Icelandic official representing the country in these negotiations complained to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that the NATO officials had no understanding of the Icelandic position, supported the British and did not behave like representatives from an international and neutral organization.¹⁴

The Icelandic government attempted to involve the United States and Prime Minister Hermann Jónasson wrote a letter to the US ambassador in Iceland, John J. Muccio, and pointed out that many Icelanders considered it paradoxical to keep up diplomatic relations with a state that used military force against them and be a co-member of an alliance with this same state. In his answer to the letter Muccio never addressed the real issue at hand but put up a shield of vague diplomatic phrases.¹⁵ The Americans felt cornered and did not know what to do, with their main ally in the Cold War on one hand and important military installations in Iceland on the other.

When it became clear that the negotiations would yield no result, the Icelandic Minister for Fisheries, Lúðvík Jósepsson, signed a regulation extending the fishery limit to 12-miles on 1 September 1958. The first British frigates entered the 12-mile limit instantly to assist the trawlers in their confrontations with the Icelandic Coastguard vessels. For the next two years a war of nerves raged in the Icelandic waters. The Coastguard vessels harried and attempted to seize the trawlers while they tried to fish inside designated boxes protected by the frigates and destroyers.

Occasionally this war of nerves became violent when trawlers resorted to ramming Coastguard vessels and the Icelanders threatened to open fire.

Later in the year 1958 the leftist government resigned because of disagreement on economic problems and austerity measures. In the autumn of 1959 the Independence Party and the Social Democrats formed a new government, the so-called 'Government for Reconstruction'. Its main priority was economic reform and consequently solving the fishery dispute was put aside for some time.

In the spring of 1960 the UN organized a conference on fishery limits and coastal jurisdiction in Geneva. There the Canadian and the US delegations presented a proposal called the 6+6 proposal. According to it, coastal states could claim 12-mile fishery limits but states with historical rights in the disputed waters could fish up to a 6-mile limit for a fixed number of years. The Icelandic delegation could not accept this proposal and it did not get the 2/3 of the votes necessary to become international law.

Guðmundur Í. Guðmundsson, the Icelandic Minister for Foreign Affairs, later claimed that he could have accepted the 6+6 proposal had it led to better relations with NATO and Great-Britain.¹⁶ But the government had a slim parliamentary majority and at least two Independence Party MPs from the Western Fjords, and perhaps one from the Western part of the country, opposed any solution of this kind meaning that the government did not have a majority in parliament for the 6+6 proposal.¹⁷

During the summer of 1960 the two governments began informally and tentatively to seek an agreement but because of the Icelandic government's weak position the progress was very slow. Shortly before the Geneva conference the Royal Navy withdrew from the 12-mile limit and the Icelandic Coastguard kept a low profile. The British government, however, had set a time limit and had decided to send the navy back inside the limit on 12 August if the Icelandic government had not begun negotiations with them.¹⁸ At the last minute the Icelandic government agreed to start negotiations and the Navy did not re-enter the 12-mile limit. We do not know whether the Icelandic government was aware of the British intentions and therefore gave way. At least there is no documented evidence of this.

The negotiations were very difficult and dragged on until February 1961. It was not until the British had in fact conceded on all points and accepted the 1958 proposal with some modifications that an agreement could be signed. It also contained assurances that there would be no further unilateral extension on behalf of the Icelanders and that disagreement between the nations on fishery limits could be referred to the International Court in The Hague.

The British fishing industry was not pleased with the results but Foreign Secretary Sir Alec Douglas Home and Sir Christopher Soames, Secretary for Fisheries and Food, simply declared that **NATO's defences in the North-Atlantic and the balance of power were more important than the interests of the Humber trawler owners and fishermen.**¹⁹ The agreement was so advantageous to the Icelanders that even the firmest advocates of the extension in governmental circles could accept it. On the other hand the opposition pointed out that clauses in the agreement on British rights to refer to the International Court could be harmful to Iceland's interests and announced that the agreement was signed under duress and when in power they would not respect it and extend if necessary.²⁰

There are no indications that NATO or the United States government put undue pressure on the Icelanders or, for that matter, the British to negotiate. They just urged caution. In British documents there are indications that some indirect pressure was put on the British by other NATO governments. **British officials claimed for example that other NATO states would not be pleased if the Navy's actions in Icelandic waters caused Iceland to resign from the alliance.**²¹

The Icelanders threatened to resign from NATO more than once. As stated earlier, Prime Minister Jónasson and Minister for Foreign Affairs Guðmundsson did just that in 1958 and **in the summer of 1960, Bjarni Benediktsson, Minister for Justice, repeated the threat to the American ambassador** and Minister for Foreign Affairs Guðmundsson told Sir Patrick Reilly, the British negotiator, the same thing later in the autumn.²² Benediktsson's threats were of great concern for Iceland's allies. He had signed the NATO agreement in 1949 and was considered one of NATO's most dependable and influential supporters.

In September 1960, Prime Ministers Harold Macmillan and Ólafur Thors met in Keflavík Airport and discussed the problems facing them. Thors said that even though he agreed absolutely with Macmillan he could not indulge because if he did so the communists would take over the government.²³ Minister for Foreign Affairs Guðmundsson also said later that if the centre-right government fell a new government would take over and ask the Soviet Union for assistance.²⁴ Of course this was all unofficial. The official Icelandic policy was that the Anglo-Icelandic dispute had no connection with NATO or the American military base in Keflavík unless NATO or the United States could assist in solving it.

Undoubtedly, the Icelandic centre-right politicians, just as much as other NATO leaders, feared that if Iceland resigned from NATO and terminated the defence treaty with the United States, the Cod War would upset the balance of power in the North-Atlantic. But because of the internal political situation in Iceland it was impossible for them to align themselves with the British point of view. The fact is that internal politics always had priority over common western Cold War interests in the minds of Icelandic politicians and they frequently used Iceland's unique position to have their way when they disagreed with their allies.

But what about the Soviet position? The Soviet Union had claimed 12-mile jurisdiction and therefore supported the Icelandic cause. Whether they had anything planned in case Iceland resigned from NATO is not known but in the British documents there are indications that the Soviets had no special interest in the dispute but also that they opposed extension of the Icelandic fishery limit further than 12 miles.²⁵

The 'Government for Reconstruction' was in power until 1971 and during that period there were no further extensions. The government considered itself bound by the 1961 treaty. In 1969, however, the Icelandic parliament passed a law on the sovereign rights of Iceland on the continental shelf around the country.²⁶

The 50-mile dispute 1972–1973

The extension of the fishery limit to 50 miles was one of the hottest issues in the 1971 elections and the most important election platform promise of the Progressive Party,

the People's Alliance and the Liberal Left, a breakaway group from the People's Alliance. These parties gained a majority in the elections and formed a government called the 'Second Leftist government'. The extension of the fishery limit was its top political priority. The leaders of the opposition parties, the Independence Party and the Social Democrats, were of the opinion that Iceland had to honour the 1961 agreement and thought it proper to wait until the result of the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1973 would be published. Ordinary party members and voters however put pressure on the leadership to support the extension and it soon became apparent that it would be some time before the UN convention reached a conclusion.²⁷

Lúðvík Jósepsson became Minister for Fisheries for the second time in 1971 and he organized several public meetings on the issue all over the country. People from other political parties participated and expressed support for the extension. Jósepsson emphasized that the extension, Iceland's membership of NATO and the US military base in Keflavík were separate issues.²⁸ This was very clever because Jósepsson realized of course that as soon as Britain resorted to naval protection of the trawlers the public would automatically make the connection between these issues.

Why did the Icelanders only extend to 50 miles and not to 200 miles like many states in South America had done? The reason is simply that the fishing grounds that mattered most for the Icelanders were within 50 miles from the coast, while at that time the fish stocks between 50 and 200 miles were of lesser importance. It would also have been much more difficult to defend 200 miles than 50.²⁹

In the preparations for the extension the government emphasized that it was the common goal of the Icelandic people and kept the opposition well informed at all times. The British and West German governments were informed in early 1972 that the 1961 treaty was no longer applicable owing to changes in circumstances. This was a wording the opposition could accept.³⁰

The policy of the British government was clear: International law on fisheries was to be decided on by the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference and the British government was ready to accept its results. The British hoped that interests of both coastal states and states that depended on long distance fishing would be safeguarded by the conference. In the short term, fishing outside the Icelandic 12-mile limit should be agreed up on either bilaterally by the British and the Icelandic governments, or through the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission.³¹

When it became clear that the Icelanders would carry out the extension unilaterally the British and the West Germans referred to the International Court in The Hague according to the 1961 treaty and asked the court to issue a preliminary verdict because of the impending 50-mile extension. The Icelanders announced immediately that they considered the extension to be a domestic affair and that the court had no jurisdiction in the matter.³²

The Icelandic government also decided to try negotiations, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs Einar Ágústsson travelled to Britain and West Germany to explain the Icelandic position. He pointed out that many important fish stocks around Iceland were overexploited and their exploitation had to be restricted. He also emphasized that the Icelanders had no other natural resources to rely on and the opposing parties were asked to take that into consideration. But the British-West German policy was inflexible and they felt they had a sound case at the International Court. On the other

hand the Icelanders pointed out that the British had already taken over natural resources, oil and gas, at the bottom of the sea far beyond the continental shelf. The British replied that it was a completely different issue and pointed out that international law made clear distinction between resources in and under the sea.³³

An attempt was made in May 1972 to reach a preliminary agreement but the gap between the Icelandic proposals and the British ideas was too wide.³⁴

During the summer of 1972 the opposition newspapers, *Morgunblaðið*, *Alþýðublaðið* and *Vísir*, frequently attacked the People's Alliance ministers, Jósefsson and Magnús Kjartansson, Minister for Health, claiming that they were deliberately trying to provoke tension between Iceland and its allies in order to damage western cooperation and their political allies in the government were said to be unable to restrain them. The British media quickly caught on to this and 'the disagreement' within the Icelandic camp got wide coverage. Jósefsson claims that almost every foreign reporter that interviewed him asked about this.³⁵ We do not know what effect this had on the British negotiators but it is easy to imagine that presenting the matter in this way led them to believe that the Icelanders were divided among themselves just as in 1958.³⁶

The fishery limit was extended to 50 miles on 1 September 1972 according to plan and shortly afterwards, things began to get rough. The trawlers tried to defend themselves against the coastguard vessels with various methods, some ingenious, some not. First they painted over their names and numbers to prevent the Icelanders from pressing charges later on, then they tried convoy fishing and finally they tried to ram the coastguard vessels. But the Icelandic coastguard had a secret weapon that they put to good use. It was the trawl wire cutters that became famous or notorious depending on how you look at it. They were used for the first time on 5 September 1972. The trawl wire cutters were designed by Pétur Sigurðsson, Director of the Icelandic Coastguard, and constructed by Tómas Sigurðsson and Friðrik Teitsson, heads of the Coastguard machine shop, during the 1958–1961 war but never used at the time because when all the coastguard vessels had been equipped with them negotiations were well under way.³⁷

The British government did not take any action until after the Coastguard had preformed several successful wire cuttings. The first step was to lease three tugboats to protect the trawlers but the British government hesitated to send the Royal Navy in right away because of the obvious political consequences. Nimrod surveillance airplanes on missions in the North-Atlantic were also used to inform the trawlers on the whereabouts of the coastguard vessels. When the Icelanders became aware of this they denied them access to Icelandic air jurisdiction or the use of any facilities in Iceland. They also put this to work in their propaganda campaign, and Ambassador Hannes Jónsson claims that the Nimrods neglected their duties for NATO because of this new mission.³⁸

The tugboats and the Nimrod surveillance flights were of little use to the trawlers and on 19 May 1973 it was decided to call in the Royal Navy after the trawler-captains threatened to sail home. The British told NATO headquarters about the decision shortly before the Navy weighed anchors but NATO neither informed the Icelandic delegation nor the Icelandic government about this. This infuriated the Icelanders, and a huge demonstration was organized in Reykjavík, demanding that the government

would take the matter up at the UN. The Icelandic ambassador in London was called home for consultation.³⁹

At the UN headquarters, the Icelandic delegation met with all the representatives in the UN Security Council. At that time the Sudanese representative was chairman of the council and his assessment of the situation was that a formal charge would be of little use to Iceland because the council could not do much more than urge both parties to show restraint. Other representatives shared that opinion.⁴⁰ The US assistant representative C. Phillips said that his government was worried and understood the Icelandic position but he urged caution and in his reply indicated that someone was working on a solution behind the scenes.

Jakob Malik, the Soviet representative, claimed that the fishery dispute as such was not in the Security Council's sphere of activity but should be referred to the International Court but he promised to inform the Soviet foreign office.⁴¹ In a reply on 14 July 1973 the Soviet authorities stated that the British naval action was a threat to security and peace in the area and if the Icelanders charged the British they would not prevent them. On the other hand they emphasized that the dispute was a matter for the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea.⁴²

At a meeting of the Nordic UN representatives the Norwegian ambassador advised against putting the charge to the Security Council. He said that it would force several nations, such as the United States and France, to support the British even though they did not want to.⁴³

Officials of the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs travelled widely that summer to advocate the Icelandic cause. In Portugal Niels P. Sigurðsson, later ambassador in London, met with the Foreign Minister Dr Rui Patricio, among others. He pointed out that when one NATO state attacks another many NATO supporters in Iceland were wavering in their belief in the value of the alliance. The Portuguese were a bit worried about this but more concerned about the Scandinavian stand on the Portuguese colonies in Africa and tried to talk the Icelanders into abstaining in the vote on the issue at the UN.⁴⁴

In the Netherlands, Sigurðsson pointed out to Foreign Minister Van Der Stoel that the British activities could induce the Icelanders to revise their membership of NATO and the defence treaty with the United States. Van Der Stoel was non-committed but expressed hope that the dispute could be solved soon.⁴⁵

Unofficial channels were also used to influence European leaders. The Social Democrats sent a letter to the Labour leader Harold Wilson⁴⁶ and Varðberg, an organization of supporters of NATO and Western cooperation in Iceland, sent NATO's Secretary General a telegram claiming that the British had reduced many years of work of the organization to nothing.⁴⁷

As in earlier disputes the Icelandic embassies conducted a vigorous propaganda campaign. Publications on the Icelandic position were distributed; emissaries spoke with influential people and tried to influence them. A special effort was put into public relations in Britain and the journalist Llewellyn Chanter, who had covered the 12-mile dispute for the *Daily Telegraph*, was hired to represent the Icelandic cause.⁴⁸ His work was in many respects similar to the public relations in the 12-mile dispute but Iceland also had several influential supporters among the British public who made their voices heard.⁴⁹

But now the Icelandic government received unexpected reinforcements. Icelandic students abroad, especially in Scandinavia but also in Germany, started a vigorous campaign with leaflets and other publications. They also lobbied organizations where they had influence, to give Iceland their support. Radical students on the far left, many of Maoist orientation, were prominent in these activities. As they were generally well organized it was easy for them to start this work. In their propaganda the extension of the fishery limit was connected to the struggle against imperialism and the war in Vietnam.⁵⁰

But it was not only radical organizations that supported Iceland. In the files of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, stored in the Icelandic National Archives, declarations of support from Scandinavian young conservatives and the Norwegian Christian Party can be found, and also a letter signed by Liam Fitzkelly, secretary of the Provisional and Official Alliance of the IRA who offers its support. He proposes to organize a sabotage of British ships and proposes a discussion with Icelandic authorities on the subject.⁵¹ There are no indications in the files to show how this 'generous' offer was treated.

During the summer of 1973, the Cod War raged on the fishing grounds. The British frigates and the coastguard vessels collided time and again and the situation was very tense. At the end of August a sailor on one of the coastguard vessels was killed in an accident when repairing the ship after a collision. After that, British ships were banned from all Icelandic harbours, except in case of extreme emergencies like serious injuries or accidents. On 27 September, Icelandic aviation authorities banned its ground pilots to service any British military aircraft in its sector. The government also announced that diplomatic relations would be broken off on 3 October if the Royal Navy were still within the 50-mile limit.⁵²

Until that moment, NATO and the United States had not actively attempted to reconcile the parties of the dispute. It was very difficult for NATO to intervene because of the character of its organisation. All such decisions had to be agreed on unanimously, and a key partner like Britain could block any activity it did not desire. However, Joseph Luns, NATO's Secretary General, tried to use his influence to get the opponents to the negotiating table but without much success.

The US government refused to be dragged into the conflict. Its position was that this was an Anglo-Icelandic conflict and the British and Icelandic governments had to sort it out on their own. Behind the scenes William Rogers, the US Secretary of State, urged caution to both parties but did not apply pressure of any kind to either party.

The Icelandic Prime Minister Ólafur Jóhannesson believed, however, very strongly that the Americans could control the British and order them to withdraw the Royal Navy. When Richard Nixon and the French president, George Pompidou, met for a summit in Iceland in June 1973 he used the opportunity to put pressure on the Americans. Nixon still refused to get involved but some American politicians and officials thought otherwise. Donald Rumsfeld, then the US representative at NATO's headquarters, was of the opinion that NATO and the United States should try harder to work out a solution to the conflict. Nixon, Rogers and Henry Kissinger did not agree and ordered him not to get involved.

But it was becoming more and more difficult not to get involved. In Iceland people asked themselves why NATO and the United States did not intervene in what was, in their opinion, blatant British aggression. They had been told that American

navy base in Keflavík was there to protect the Icelanders so why did the Americans not do something when Icelandic ships were attacked? The Keflavík base became a centre of attention and demands of withdrawal from NATO and sending home the Americans grew stronger and stronger.⁵³

In the late summer, the situation had become very embarrassing for both NATO and the United States. Icelandic threats of withdrawal from NATO and termination of diplomatic relations with Britain had to be acted upon and now the alliance took the initiative. General Secretary Joseph Luns talked the British government into withdrawing the frigates out of the 50-mile limit on the condition that the Icelandic leaders came to a meeting in London.⁵⁴

That was all Prime Minister Jóhannesson needed and in spite of great pressure from the public not to yield and not to negotiate except on Icelandic terms he went to London for a final attempt to negotiate an acceptable solution to the crisis with Prime Minister Edward Heath.

After difficult negotiations in London on 15 and 16 October, a two-year treaty was signed. According to the treaty the annual British catch could be 130,000 tons of cod but their biggest trawlers and factory ships were to be excluded. Icelandic fishing authorities could also temporarily close certain sections of the fishing grounds to trawlers and certain sectors of the fishing grounds were to be reserved for inshore fishermen. The EEC Protocol 6, restricting import of certain Icelandic fishing products while Iceland was in a fisheries dispute with EEC countries, was to be lifted. From the Icelandic point of view there was one serious flaw. The British did not recognize Icelandic jurisdiction inside the 50 miles and this was to have serious consequences in the next dispute. Also, Iceland still had not signed a treaty with West Germany, so in fact Protocol 6 continued to be in force.

In Iceland, public opinion on the treaty was divided. Supporters of NATO were, of course, delighted that the dispute was over and thanked the alliance for the outcome but opponents of NATO and the American base claimed that General Secretary Luns had forced Prime Minister Jóhannesson to sign the treaty. Members of the People's Alliance did not think much of it although in the end its MP's supported it, because otherwise their ministers would have had to resign from the government. The party's official line was that, though flawed, the treaty had so many benefits that voting against it would be irresponsible. Many in the fishing industry were of the same opinion. Six MPs of the Independence Party also criticized the treaty and in the end they were the only ones to vote against it.

The 200-mile dispute

In the debate on the 50-mile agreement in parliament the Independence Party announced that it would extend the fishery limit to 200 miles as soon as it would gain power. The party formed a government with the Progressive Party in August 1974 after an election victory and the 200-mile extension was on its agenda. In November 1975 the 50 mile agreement would be terminated and the government intended to extend the fishing limits shortly before, on 15 October. In July 1975 Matthías Bjarnason, Minister for Fisheries, signed a directive on the extension. It did not apply to the British trawlers until November since the 50-mile treaty was still in force.

As could be expected, the British reacted strongly. However, their most important fishing grounds were within the 50 miles so the 200-mile extension in itself was not important, their main object was to have access to the 50 miles. Anthony Crosland, Secretary for Environment and MP for Grimsby, announced in the autumn that if an acceptable agreement could not be reached the trawlers would fish right up to the 12 miles.⁵⁵

Many thought it was strange that, on the one hand, the British supported a 200 mile economic jurisdiction on an international level and had in fact taken it in the North Sea to secure their oil rights but, on the other, they refused the Icelanders that same right on their fishing grounds. Prime Minister Geir Hallgrímsson pointed this discrepancy out to Prime Minister Harold Wilson and Foreign Secretary James Callaghan in June 1975 when negotiations were held to prevent a new Cod War.⁵⁶

The British fishing industry was at this time facing enormous difficulties because of over-fishing, rising operating costs and low fish prices. Britain's entry to the EEC also posed problems for the industry. The British government wanted to buy time before the new Law of the Sea took effect and the EEC extended its fishing limit. Being able to continue fishing around Iceland would help the fishing industry to adapt. The British therefore continued in the same way as before, claiming historical rights, and pointed to the July 1974 verdict of the International Court that was in their favour and the fact that there still was no international law in effect on fisheries jurisdiction. Their object was access to the fishing grounds in a bilateral agreement with Iceland.⁵⁷ Prime Minister Wilson was also convinced that there was no agreement in sight at the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. Contrary to the Heath government, the Wilson government accepted that the fish stocks were threatened by over-fishing and was ready to accept smaller catches, at least temporarily.⁵⁸

Negotiations continued on and off during the autumn. The position of the British delegates under the leadership of Roy Hattersley, Assistant Foreign Secretary, was very firm. They offered economic concessions within the EEC in exchange for fishing rights but Minister for Foreign Affairs Ágústsson was not impressed, remembering how the concessions in the 50-mile agreement proved useless, for example the lifting of Protocol 6.

The Icelandic Marine Research Institute released a report on the condition of the fish stocks. Scientific counsellors of both countries examined this report together and agreed that the situation was serious indeed, and the fish stocks were overexploited. This took Hattersley completely by surprise and in the end he stated that the issue needed a political solution. Discussions on the size of the British catch led nowhere.⁵⁹

In a report in 1978 a parliamentary committee criticized Hattersley's lack of understanding on the poor condition of the fish stocks and blamed him for the outcome of the dispute.⁶⁰

In short, no agreement was reached and the 200-mile dispute was a kind of a replay of the 50-mile one. The coastguard vessels cut the trawls from the trawlers and the British government first sent in tugs and then the Royal Navy on 25 November 1975. The frigates tried to protect the trawlers and rammed the Icelandic gunboats. Both parties suffered a great deal of damage but the frigates were more vulnerable and many of them were seriously crippled and taken to dock for repairs.

In Iceland, opposition to NATO increased and people who had up to that time supported the alliance blamed it for not intervening. The US military base was the prime target and a group of local people barred the roads leading to it with cars and barricades of rocks and mud. In this group were prominent local leaders of the Independence Party and the Progressive Party and Social Democrats as well as opponents of Icelandic NATO membership and the defence treaty. There were growing demands for the country's resignation from NATO and the expulsion of the US military force. People pointed out that the Americans did not honour their obligations of defending Iceland when the country was under attack. The anti-NATO feeling reached a climax on 15 May 1976 when opponents of the American military base in Iceland organized a march from Keflavík to Reykjavík, about 40 km. Close to 4000 people marched most of the way and in the evening crowd of 10,000 gathered in Reykjavík city centre (population at the time about 82,000) to demonstrate against the base.

In the political arena, the development was much the same as in 1973. The day after the Royal Navy entered the 50-mile zone the Icelandic ambassador in Washington met Robert Ingersoll from the State Department and explained the seriousness of the situation. Ingersoll stated his government's concern and said that he wished for new negotiations with the aid of friendly countries.⁶¹ Behind the scenes, the Norwegian government tried to settle the dispute, with the Foreign Minister, Knut Frydenlund, in the lead and the Swedish Foreign Minister, Sven Anderson, talked with British politicians and urged them to show caution.⁶²

The dispute was also on the agenda at the NATO headquarters. The Icelandic delegation suggested that the Icelandic government accepted Secretary General Luns offer to come to Iceland and then present the Icelandic point of view to the British. Luns managed to organize a meeting between Prime Ministers Hallgrímsson and Harold Wilson in London on 24–27 January 1976, but it was of no avail, the gap was too wide. It did not help that the situation within the Icelandic government was tense. During the lunch-break on January 26, it was reported that Icelandic coastguard vessels had cut the trawl wires of the trawler *Boston Blenheim* on the orders of Minister for Justice Jóhannesson. Wilson and Callaghan were not amused.⁶³ After prolonged negotiations, Hallgrímsson promised to try to convince his government to accept a proposal that included a British catch of 55,000 tons of cod and 10,000 tons in other species for a period of two years. The ministers of the Progressive Party rejected this proposal.⁶⁴

The Americans were worried. Assistant Secretary of State, Joseph J. Sisco, discussed the matter with Ambassador Haraldur Kröyer and explained the United States' point of view. He said that the Americans were on good terms with both parties and therefore they had avoided and indeed could not make any material recommendations. On the other hand, he hoped negotiations would not break off.⁶⁵

In Britain, serious criticism of the government's position emerged. The central committee of the Labour Party criticized their own government in a resolution and urged negotiations as quickly as possible. The British press criticized the war costs and complained that they were far too high compared with the interests involved.

Prior to the negotiations between Wilson and Hallgrímsson in January the Icelanders had threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Britain. After the

breakdown of the negotiations the Royal Navy returned inside the 50 miles, and after several serious incidents the Icelandic government broke off diplomatic relations on 19 February 1976. Matters had gone from bad to worse.

Now the other NATO governments had become really anxious about the situation and voiced their concern during the weekly lunch meeting Secretary General Luns held with the Ambassadors. Luns expressed his concern and his words indicated that he was dissatisfied with the British position. In one of these meetings the French and the Dutch delegates announced that their governments had instructed their Ambassadors in London to put pressure on the British government. Other delegates wanted to know what the Americans were doing, but the British representative claimed that the US had not put pressure on his government. The US delegate did not express any opinion on the matter. Some time before, information had leaked out that a large portion of the expensive British catch in Icelandic waters had been processed as cat food.

While this was going on the British were not idle. In February they suggested that NATO inspectors should be placed on both the frigates and the Icelandic coastguard vessels to oversee events. The other delegates, fearing that NATO might be dragged into the conflict, did not support the suggestion.

The Icelandic government was also very active. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ágústsson, announced in Norway that the Icelandic government might lease torpedo boats and airplanes from Norway and shortly thereafter the Ministry of Justice instructed the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to attempt to lease three warships of Ashville-class from the US government. The coastguard captains also had their eyes on Soviet Mirka-class frigates. To cut a long story short, Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State, flatly refused Iceland's request.⁶⁶

From February until May 1976 General Secretary Luns did his utmost to settle the conflict and he was not alone in this. Helmut Schmidt, the West-German Chancellor, did what he could and in early February he met with Harold Wilson and James Callaghan at Chequers. The Cod War was on the agenda and in these discussions the British leaders claimed that in their opinion Iceland had not the important position the West Germans and other NATO allies claimed, despite of growing Soviet presence and strength in the North Atlantic. The West Germans were very concerned after this revelation and informed the Icelandic government immediately.⁶⁷

The struggle on the sea continued until the end of May when NATO's foreign ministers held a meeting in Oslo. At the meeting were Prime Minister Hallgrímsson, representing Iceland, the new British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Crosland, representing Britain, and the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Knut Frydenlund, acting as a mediator. At this point, the United States government finally took some initiative in solving the dispute and put pressure on the British to give in.⁶⁸ Negotiations were renewed and this time an agreement was reached. Thirty British trawlers could fish within the 200-mile jurisdiction for six months and this would mark the end of almost 570 years of British fishing in Icelandic waters. This was unconditional surrender on behalf of Britain, but the reason was obvious. It was clear by now that a 200 mile jurisdiction would be accepted as a general rule at the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea and there would be no way for Britain to oppose it.

Concluding Remarks

When these events are examined, two features stand out. The first is to what lengths the British government was ready to go in its actions against an ally in NATO and second how reluctant NATO and the US government were to get involved and to settle the dispute.

Let us examine the first feature. The British policy in the Cod Wars was based on two principles, the freedom of the seas and the historical rights of British fishermen to fish in Icelandic waters. All British governments involved in the Cod wars with Iceland remained faithful to these principles until the end of the 200-mile dispute. Undoubtedly remnants of imperial pride also played an important role both for the politicians and the fishermen involved. It was common for these to play the imperialist anthem, Rule Britannia, on the trawlers' loudspeakers when they defied orders from the Icelandic gunboats. It should also be kept in mind that the owners of the trawlers and the fishing industry in general had enormous influence within the Conservative Party. This influence played an important role throughout the disputes. Nor should one underestimate the influence the Trade Unions had within the Labour Party.

In the 4-mile dispute the British paid no heed to warnings from their allies in NATO and were ready to continue the embargo on fish from Iceland long after it was clear that it had no relevance and there was no way they could force the Icelanders into a bilateral agreement on continuing fishing inside the 4-mile zone. Because of their inflexibility a considerable part of Iceland's foreign trade went to the arch-enemy, the Soviet Union.

The 12-mile dispute was a different matter. From the outset the British had reason to believe that the Icelanders were divided among themselves and this could be used for their advantage. What the Icelandic ministers said in connection with the negotiations in 1960–1961 indicates that they were ready to agree on British terms but could not because of the domestic political situation. When the British grasped the reality of the situation and realized that the Icelandic government did not have a majority in Parliament for this kind of settlement they waived lesser interests of the fishing industry for a secure military position on the North-Atlantic. This did not, however, happen until all other avenues had been tried, including naval protection of the British trawlers.

The firmness shown by the British government in the 1972–1976 struggle is also very surprising. They simply went to the edge, politically and militarily. In both instances, British action almost drove the Icelanders out of NATO. They deployed Nimrod jets, which were supposed to spy on the Soviet navy and air force, to scout on the coastguard vessels and tied up a considerable part of the British Atlantic fleet, (20–30 frigates) that were supposed to be ready to tackle a Soviet threat, in protective actions against Iceland on the fishing grounds.⁶⁹

The British policy in the 200-mile dispute is a special case. They had claimed a 200-mile economic jurisdiction on the seabed and were not, in principle, against a 200-mile fishery jurisdiction and even expected to claim one for themselves after the UNLOSC. Their policy in Icelandic waters was, therefore, in complete contradiction to their general policy. Many, both in Britain and on an international level, pointed out this discrepancy. Perhaps the newspaper *The Guardian* was right when it accused Anthony Crosland, Secretary for Environment and later Foreign Secretary, to be behind this strange policy because he represented Grimsby in parliament and trawlers

from the Humber district were the most numerous around Iceland. This issue certainly shows the Soviet threat in a new light if one of NATO's most important members was ready to jeopardize the balance of power in the Northern seas and the alliance's position in the area on account of one constituency and its interests. But perhaps the British position becomes more understandable when we consider the opinion Wilson and Callaghan revealed to Helmut Schmidt in their discussion at Chequers that Iceland's importance for NATO's defences in the north was overestimated in their view.

There are also some indications that the British government did not realize the seriousness of the matter. Hannes Jónsson was Iceland's ambassador to Moscow in the 200-mile dispute. In the late winter of 1976 a new British ambassador, Howard Smith, came to Moscow. There is a tradition within the diplomatic circles that when a new ambassador arrives he visits the other ambassadors. However, if countries are in a major dispute or at war, the ambassadors keep relations at a minimum. Ambassador Smith announced his visit to the Icelandic embassy as if nothing had happened but according to diplomatic protocol Ambassador Jónsson declined to see him.⁷⁰

Why this underestimation? The most probable explanation is the official position of the Independence Party and its organs, *Morgunblaðið* and *Vísir*, and the Social Democrats and their organ, *Alþýðublaðið*. Both parties claimed that the fishery dispute on the one hand and Iceland's membership to NATO and the defence treaty with the United States on the other were separate issues and Iceland's defence interests were of the highest priority. The country's NATO membership should be used to explain its position and put pressure on Britain in a positive way. These parties also emphasized the benefits Iceland would obtain from a fishery treaty with Britain. They called it a policy of positive pressure but when that did not work it was not long before they resorted to thinly veiled threats like the Progressive Party.⁷¹

The premise of the positive pressure policy was that most Icelandic politicians, just as much as NATO leaders and leaders of the United States, were afraid of upsetting the delicate balance of power in the North Atlantic. But common party members and voters saw things in different light. To them, being able to fish was much more important than remote issues in international politics and they knew that if British trawlers were to continue their activities on the fishing grounds the fish stocks would be in grave danger.

One also must not underestimate the difference of opinion, between the Independence Party and the Progressive Party in the 1974–1978 government on how to handle the situation. The Progressives took a much tougher stand in the dispute than the Independents and this continually caused confusion and lack of directive in decision-making and undoubtedly confused both the British negotiators and Iceland's allies in NATO. Also there is no indication that the Progressives had changed the policy Ólafur Jóhannesson expressed in the 1973 negotiations namely that Iceland's interests within the fishery limit outweighed Western defence interests in the North Atlantic.⁷²

Let us now turn to NATO and its role in all this. The alliance had formed a set of rules on how the member states were to react in a case of a sensitive conflict between them. These rules were of little help in the Anglo-Icelandic conflict; the reason was probably that the livelihood of the Icelandic nation was at stake and they could not settle for anything less than a full victory. The British were just as obstinate, even

though their interests were of little importance to other parts of the country than the Humber region. In this situation NATO's means of settling the conflict were limited and its leadership was unable to react. The Alliance was not organized to handle issues of this kind and the bureaucrats and strategists in Paris and later Brussels undoubtedly considered the Cod Wars to be a storm in a teacup. Getting too involved could also be dangerous for the Alliance because that could mean involvement in even tougher disputes, like the one between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus, which broke out in a full-scale war in 1974.

The US inaction was also understandable. They were in an impossible situation, as the conflict was between their most important ally in Europe and a key country in Western defences in the north. They tried the best they could to calm things down and urge for negotiations without getting too deeply involved. In the end the United States naturally had to act but it was not until the conflict had reached a dangerous level and Anglo-Icelandic diplomatic relations had been broken off.

Finally, what about the Soviet Union? Undoubtedly, some political considerations were involved in its decision to establish trade with Iceland in 1953, but economic interests were in the foreground. The official policy in the 12-mile dispute was to support Iceland. The Soviets themselves had claimed 12-mile jurisdiction but they were probably not ready to intervene actively in the conflict and, furthermore, they opposed Iceland's attempt to extend their jurisdiction outside the 12 miles. In later disputes they recognized Iceland's special position, but in principle opposed a larger jurisdiction than 12 miles, because most of their catches came from the high seas. They did, however, not want to get involved, as Jakob Malik's reaction at the UN indicates.

The Soviet position was expressed in much clearer terms when Soviet ambassador to Iceland, Gregory Farafonov, told his Icelandic colleague Pétur J. Thorsteinsson in May 1976 that it was in everybody's interest that Iceland should reach an agreement with Britain. When Thorsteinsson said that public opinion opposed negotiating with Britain, Farafonov replied that when great interests were at stake a government should rule. In his report after the meeting Thorsteinsson said that at last Moscow and Peking⁷³ agreed on something and he guessed that the reason for the Soviet position was that they feared that if Iceland resigned from NATO some of the Warsaw pact nations might follow suit.⁷⁴ The Soviet reaction to the 200-mile war indicates that they were in fact satisfied with the balance of power in the North Atlantic at that time and did not want to upset it by the weakening of NATO. A contributing factor here was the fact that these were the years of détente, disarmament and the Helsinki Accords. However, if Iceland had resigned from NATO and revised its defence treaty with the United States, Moscow might have changed its position.

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PRO CAB, 128 1960. 26 July. The 46. meeting of the Cabinet.

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank my colleagues, Helgi Þorláksson, Jón Þ. Þór, and Guðni Th. Jóhannesson for their valuable help in preparing this paper for publication. The term Cod War is attributed to the British journalist Llewellyn Chanter who covered the 12-mile dispute for *The Daly Telegraph*.
- 2 D. Ólafsson, *Saga landhelgismálsins*, 62–99; Thór, *British Trawlers and Iceland*, 166–70.
- 3 Jóseppson, *Landhelgismálið*, 20.
- 4 Thorsteinsson, *Utanríkisþjónusta Íslands*, 413–14.
- 5 Thorsteinsson, *Utanríkisþjónusta Íslands*, 486–492; D. Ólafsson, *Saga landhelgismálsins*, 86–87. The Soviet-Icelandic trade agreement undoubtedly facilitated the marketing of Icelandic frozen fish in the United States and at the same time destroyed a British marketing operation of similar goods.
- 6 D. Ólafsson, *Saga landhelgismálsins*, 87.
- 7 J. Ólafsson, *Kæru félagar*, 164–5.
- 8 Jóhannessen, *Ólafur Thors II*, 186–207.
- 9 Thorsteinsson, *Utanríkisþjónusta Íslands*, 415.

- 10 Ólafur Thors claims that general Grunther, NATO's chief of staff demanded of Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, that he used his influence to solve the dispute. Johannessen, *Ólafur Thors II*, 198.
- 11 Jóseppsson, *Landhelgismálið*, 18.
- 12 Guðmundsson, "Þau eru svo eftirsótt Íslandsmið...", 65.
- 13 Guðmundsson, "Þau eru svo eftirsótt Íslandsmið...", 68–70.
- 14 Guðmundur Í. Guðmundsson, "Private papers I", 20–24.
- 15 D. Ólafsson, *Saga landhelgismálsins*, 333.
- 16 Public Record Office. *PRO FO 371 151674 1351/77*. 25 May 1960.
- 17 Guðmundsson, "Þau eru svo eftirsótt Íslandsmið...", 75–76.
- 18 *PRO CAB*, 128 1960. 26 July. The 46th meeting of the Cabinet.
- 19 *PRO FO 371 159420 1351/29*.
- 20 H. Jónsson, *Friends in Conflict*, 104
- 21 Guðmundsson, "Þau eru svo eftirsótt Íslandsmið...", 77, 85; Lord Home, *The Way the Wind Blows*, 171.
- 22 Guðmundsson, "Þau eru svo eftirsótt Íslandsmið...", 77, 96.
- 23 *PRO FO 371 151682 1551/172*.
- 24 Guðmundsson, "Þau eru svo eftirsótt Íslandsmið...", 96.
- 25 *PRO FO 371 151683 1351/188 (C)*. – 151684 1351/203.
- 26 Thór, *British Trawlers and Iceland*, 198.
- 27 Jóseppsson, *Landhelgismálið*, 191–3.
- 28 Jóseppsson, *Landhelgismálið*, 198.
- 29 Jóseppsson, *Landhelgismálið*, 203.
- 30 H. Jónsson, *Friends in Conflict*, 123–4. The leaders of the Progressive Party and the People's Alliance had claimed that the 1961 agreement was signed under duress so this wording was indeed a compromise on their behalf.
- 31 *Fisheries Dispute between The United Kingdom and Iceland*.
- 32 Thór, *British Trawlers and Iceland*, 203.
- 33 H. Jónsson, *Friends in Conflict*, 126–9; Robinson, *Trawling*, 238.
- 34 Jóseppsson, *Landhelgismálið*, 211–17. Minutes of these meetings are in *Icelandic National Archives*. Icelandic Fisheries Association. Fiskifélag Íslands. BC/48.
- 35 Jóseppsson, *Landhelgismálið*, 220.
- 36 Guðmundsson, "Þau eru svo eftirsótt Íslandsmið...", 68–70.
- 37 Þorsteinsson, *Tíu þorskastríð*, 220–22.
- 38 H. Jónsson, *Friends in Conflict*, 138.
- 39 *Icelandic National Archives*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 1996. Landhelgisdeilan. 15.D.8. I.
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- 48 *Icelandic National Archives*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 1996. Landhelgisdeilan. 15.D.8. I. 22.2.73.
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- 50 On this activity see *Icelandic National Archives*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1996. Landhelgisdeilan. 15.D.8. 1–3.
- 51 *Icelandic National Archives*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 1996. Samningaviðræður við Breta. 15. D. 9. 1. 12.6.73.
- 52 H. Jónsson, *Friends in Conflict*, 146–47.
- 53 For more detailed account of these events see Ingimundarson, *Uppgjör við umheiminn*, 221–68
- 54 Jóseppson, *Landhelgismálið*, 266; H. Jónsson, *Friends in Conflict*, 146–9.
- 55 *Icelandic National Archives*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 1996. Samningaviðræður við Breta. 15. D. 9. 2. 7.10.75.
- 56 *Icelandic National Archives*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 1996. Samningaviðræður við Breta. 15. D. 9. 2. 24.6.75.
- 57 A. Jónsson, “Tíunda þorskastríðið 1975–1976”, 10–12, 24, 38. Based on British governments press releases and other published documents.
- 58 Wilson, *Final Term*, 217–218. When asked about the problem of over-fishing in the documentary *Síðasti valsinn* (The Last Waltz, directed by Margrét Jónasdóttir), Edward Heath answered: “Don’t make me laugh”.
- 59 *Icelandic National Archives*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 1996. Samningaviðræður við Breta. 15. D. 9. 2. 23.10.75.
- 60 *Ministry for Foreign Affairs Archives*. Landhelgisviðræður Íslendinga og Breta. 15. D. 9. 3. should be 4.
- 61 *Icelandic National Archives*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 1996. Samningaviðræður við Breta. 15. D. 9. 3. 26.11.75.
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- 63 *Icelandic National Archives*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 1996. Samningaviðræður við Breta. 15. D. 9. 3. Minutes from the negotiations at Chequers 24–26 January 1976.
- 64 Wilson, *Final Term*, 218–219.
- 65 *Icelandic National Archives*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 1996. Samningaviðræður við Breta. 15. D. 9. 3. 2.2.76.
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- 67 *Ministry for Foreign Affairs Archives*. Landhelgisviðræður Íslendinga og Breta. 15. D. 9. 3. should be 4.
- 68 A. Jónsson, “Tíunda þorskastríðið 1975–1976”, 96–97; H. Jónsson, *Friends in Conflict*, 179–82.
- 69 The Faroese helped the Icelanders a great deal by refusing to repair the British frigates damaged in the dispute so they had to sail all the way to Scotland for repairs.
- 70 H. Jónsson, *Friends in Conflict*, 171–3.

- 71 A. Jónsson, “Tíunda þorskastríðið 1975–1976”, 15–16, 93–94.
- 72 *Icelandic National Archives*. Icelandic Embassy London 1990. B.395.
- 73 The Chinese government had urged the British and the Icelandic governments to settle the dispute because it could diminish NATO’s defence capacity against the Soviet Union.
- 74 *Ministry for Foreign Affairs Archives*. Landhelgisviðræður Íslendinga og Breta. 15.D.9. 3. Should be 4.–17.5.76.

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